

One Hundred Fifth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE FIRST SESSION

*Begun and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday,
the seventh day of January, one thousand nine hundred and ninety-seven*

Concurrent Resolution

Recognizing the significance of maintaining the health and stability of coral reef ecosystems.

Whereas coral reefs are among the world's most biologically diverse and productive marine habitats, and are often described as the tropical rain forest of the oceans;

Whereas healthy coral reefs provide the basis for subsistence, commercial fisheries, and coastal and marine tourism and are of vital economic importance to coastal States and territories of the United States including Florida, Hawaii, Georgia, Texas, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands;

Whereas healthy coral reefs function as natural, regenerating coastal barriers, protecting shorelines and coastal areas from high waves, storm surges, and accompanying losses of human life and property;

Whereas the scientific community has long established that coral reefs are subject to a wide range of natural and anthropogenic threats;

Whereas a wide variety of destructive fishing practices, including the use of cyanide, other poisons, surfactants, and explosives, are contributing to the global decline of coral reef ecosystems;

Whereas the United States has taken measures to protect national coral reef resources through the designation and management of several marine protected areas, containing reefs of the Flower Garden Banks in the Gulf of Mexico, the Florida Keys in south Florida, and offshore Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa;

Whereas the United States, acting through its agencies, has established itself as a global leader in coral reef stewardship by launching the International Coral Reef Initiative and by maintaining professional networks for the purposes of sharing knowledge and information on coral reefs, furnishing near real-time data collected at coral reef sites, providing a repository for historical data relating to coral reefs, and making substantial contributions to the general fund of coral reef knowledge; and

Whereas 1997 has been declared the "International Year of the Reef" by the coral reef research community and over 40 national and international scientific, conservation, and academic organizations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress recognizes the significance of maintaining the health and stability of coral reef ecosystems by—

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- (1) promoting comprehensive stewardship for coral reef ecosystems;
- (2) discouraging unsustainable fisheries or other practices that are harmful to coral reefs and human health;
- (3) encouraging research, monitoring, and assessment of and education on coral reef ecosystems;
- (4) improving the coordination of coral reef efforts and activities of Federal agencies, academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and industry; and
- (5) promoting preservation and sustainable use of coral reef resources worldwide.

Attest:

Clerk of the House of Representatives.

Attest:

Secretary of the Senate.